Entry type: Person
Entry ID: AWE5382

Battye, Margaret

(1909 - 1949)

Born	19090809, Subiaco Western Australia Australia
Died	19491116, Subiaco Western Australia Australia
Occupation	Barrister, Lawyer, Political party organiser, Solicitor, Women's rights activist

Summary

Margaret Battye was the only child of Nellie May (née Robertson) and Charles Battye, a librarian. She graduated from the University of Western Australia (LL.B., 1931; B.A., 1933) and was admitted to the Bar in 1933. In June of 1933 she reputedly became the first woman to represent a client in a Western Australian court of law, and in so doing, according to the presiding magistrate, ‘created legal history’ by being the first woman to appear before him as a barrister. She won the case. From 1936 she practised on her own as a barrister and solicitor, and from 1939 worked for the Council for Civil Liberties.

Battye was active in several Western Australian women’s organisations, including the local branch of the Australian Federation of University Women, the Women’s Services Guilds, the Perth Business and Professional Women’s Club, the Karrakatta and the Soroptimist Clubs. She acted as honorary legal adviser to almost all the women’s organisations in Perth during the 1930s and 40s. She was also active in the Liberal Party of Australia’s Western Australian division and was given responsibility for the foundation of the State women’s committee. She chaired a national committee for the United Nations’ commission into the status of women

She became ill with Grave’s disease and passed away in 1949.

Published resources

Resource Section
Battye, Margaret (1919-1949), Medcalf, M., 2006,
http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/battye-margaret-9454

Article
Creating Legal History: Miss Margaret Battye's Debut, 1933,
http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article75504232

Nationality of Women: Address by Margaret Battye, 1936,
http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article40737607

Miss Battye Remembered, 1950,
http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article80829861

Resource
Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Site Exhibition
Australian Women Lawyers as Active Citizens, Trailblazing Women Lawyers Project Team, 2016,
http://www.womenaustralia.info/lawyers

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